



Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Nabesna

Road Guide

The Nabesna Road offers Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve visitors a unique opportunity to explore interior Alaska. The drive is an adventure in the midst of the Wrangell, Mentasta and Nutzotin Mountains. Camping, hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing and hunting are just a sampling of the activities available just off of the road.



Slana, Alaska

Slana is located between Mileposts 58 and 64 of the Tok Cut-Off and along the first four miles of the Nabesna Road. The area features a roadhouse, camping, lodging, a general store, post office and school. There is also an Alaska Department of Transportation Maintenance Camp as well as the Slana Ranger Station. Historically, the area has been home to the Ahtna people of the Copper River headwaters region. In the 19th century, Russian fur traders, and later U.S. Army explorers, came up the Copper River to map and explore the area. Prospectors came into the region in the late 1800's. Nabesna Mine was a productive operation during the 1930's and into the early 1940's.

Nabesna Road

The 46-mile long gravel road traverses the headwater country of the Copper and upper Tanana drainages, crossing the watershed divide at Mile 24.7. The Copper River drains into the Gulf of Alaska while the Tanana drains into the Yukon River and then into the Bering Sea.

Nabesna Road was originally built in 1933 by the Alaska Road Commission to supply Nabesna Mine and to ship out its ore. Today, the Alaska Department of Transportation maintains the Nabesna Road and, generally, the road is passable by most two-wheel drive vehicles. However, higher clearance and/or four-wheel drive are occasionally needed beyond Mile 29 due to stream crossings. Wet conditions such as spring run-off and heavy rain can make these stream crossings impassable. The last four miles of the road are not maintained and may be deeply rutted and wet. Vehicle travel on this portion of the road is not recommended.

Stream Crossings

There are three streams and several intermittent drainages that cross the Nabesna Road. The stream crossings are Trail Creek (Mile 29), Lost Creek (Mile 30.8), and Boyden Creek (Mile 34.3). These streams are usually dry or have only a shallow flow over the road surface. All drainages may carry a heavy flow of water and debris and carve channels through the roadbed. When there is water in these areas, we recommend that you stop and examine the crossing. If you decide to proceed, it is important to maintain momentum as you cross. Do not stop until you are completely through the water as the gravel beds of the streams can be soft. For current conditions contact the Slana Ranger Station (907-822-5238).

Private Property

Privately owned properties within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve adjoin the Nabesna Road and the associated trail system in several places. This includes the Nabesna Mine, located at Mile 46. Please respect the privacy of these areas. Information on federal land access and private property locations is available at park headquarters in Copper Center (907-822-7261) and at the Slana Ranger Station (907-822-5238).

ATV Trails

Most of the trails listed in this guide are traditional ATV trails. Hikers are welcome to use them, but should be prepared for wet, muddy, and uneven hiking conditions. All recreational ATV operators must have a Special Use Permit from the National Park Service. Permits may be obtained free of charge at the Slana Ranger Station.

MILEPOSTS

The following highlights are points of interest along the Nabesna Road. The mileage begins at the intersection of the Glenn Highway (Tok Cut-Off) and the Nabesna Road and is based on actual odometer readings.

- Mile 0.2** Turn right to access the Slana Ranger Station and Alaska Department of Transportation Maintenance Camp.

Mile 0.8 Turn left to Slana Post Office (window hours 10-2 MWF) and public pay phone.

Mile 1.7 Slana River access and campsites.

Mile 4 Gravel road surface begins.

Mile 6.1 Rufus Creek. Primitive campsite with picnic table. Fishing for Rainbow Trout and Dolly Varden available.

Mile 11 Suslota Lake Trailhead. This is a multiple use trail. Park in the gravel pit on the south side of the road at mile 11.1 and walk back 225 feet to the trailhead on the north side of the road.

Mile 12.2 Copper Lake Trailhead and primitive campsite with picnic table. This is a multiple use trail. Copper Lake offers Lake Trout, Grayling and Burbot fishing.

Mile 16.6 Primitive campsite with picnic table. Beautiful view of Kettle Lake, Mt. Sanford (16,237 ft), Capital Mountain (7,731 ft), Mt. Wrangell (14,163 ft), Mt. Zanetti and Tanada Peak (9,240 ft) to the southwest and the Mentasta Mountains and Noyes Mountain to the northeast.

Mile 17.8 Dead Dog Hill Rest Area. Campsite with picnic table, vaulted toilet and trash receptacle. View of Noyes Mountain of the Mentasta Mountain Range to the north. Noyes Mountain is the tallest of the Mentasta Mountains at 8,235 ft.

Mile 19.2 Caribou Creek Trailhead. Park in the gravel pit on the north side of the road at mile 18.9 before arriving at the actual trailhead which is also on the north side of the road. This is a multiple use trail for the first three miles.

Mile 21.8 Rock Lake Rest Area. Campsite with picnic table, vaulted toilet and trash receptacle.

Mile 22.9 Long Lake Access. Grayling and Burbot fishing are available.

Mile 24 Tanada Lake Trailhead. This is a multiple use trail. Tanada Lake offers Grayling and Lake Trout fishing.

Mile 24.7 Watershed Divide (3,320 ft). Leaving the
- Copper River watershed which drains into the Gulf of Alaska and entering the Yukon River watershed which drains into the Bering Sea.

Mile 27.8 Twin Lakes Rest Area. Campsites with picnic tables, vaulted toilet and trash receptacle. Fishing for Grayling, Lake Trout and Burbot available. Great spot for viewing waterfowl and shore birds.

Mile 29 Trail Creek crossing and trailhead. Trail Creek is subject to changing water levels and may periodically require higher clearance or four-wheel drive to cross. Check with Slana Ranger Station for current conditions. Trail Creek Trail is a multiple use trail.

Mile 30.8 Lost Creek crossing and trailhead. Lost Creek is subject to changing water levels and may periodically require higher clearance or four-wheel drive to cross. Check with Slana Ranger Station for current conditions. The Lost Creek Trailhead is at mile 31 on the north side of the road and is a multiple use trail, which offers access to Big Grayling Lake, Soda Creek, Platinum Creek, Mineral Springs, and Soda Lake.

Mile 34.3 Boyden Creek crossing. Boyden Creek is subject to changing water levels and may periodically require higher clearance or four-wheel drive to cross. Check with Slana Ranger Station for current conditions.

Mile 34.6 Primitive campsite on the south side of the road.

Mile 35.3 Jack Creek Rest Area. Several campsites with picnic tables are available in the area across the bridge, as well as a vaulted toilet and trash receptacle. Grayling fishing is available in Jack Creek. Views of Boyden Hills to the north and Skookum Volcano formation to the south.

Mile 36.2 Skookum Volcano Trailhead. Hiking trail only.

Mile 40.2 Reeve Field and Nabesna River Trailhead. This is a multiple use trail. Views of Devil’s Mountain to the east and the Nutzotin Mountains to the southeast.

Mile 42 End of state maintenance of Nabesna Road. There is private property on both sides of the road. Watch for children and horses. Please stay off the runway. Devil’s Mountain Lodge assesses a fee for parking on private property.

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

